

09/879,279

Serial No.: 09/879,279

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original): An in vitro method of capturing one or more target simple sequence repeats, wherein the method comprises the steps of:

providing one or more modified oligonucleotide conjugates, wherein each of the modified oligonucleotide conjugates comprises at least one locked nucleic acid and a linking molecule;

incubating a sample of nucleic acids with the modified oligonucleotide conjugates, thereby forming one or more hybridized duplexes, wherein each duplex comprises a target simple sequence repeat portion and a modified oligonucleotide conjugate portion;

contacting substantially all of the hybridized duplexes with a linking source, such that the linking molecule of each duplex that contacts the linking source forms a bond with the linking source; and

separating substantially all of the hybridized duplexes from the sample of nucleic acids by extracting the linking source from the sample.

2. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the sample of nucleic acids contains one or more nucleic acid molecules having a nucleotide sequence which comprises one or more target simple sequence repeats.

3. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the captured simple sequence repeat portion comprises 1, 2, 3, or 4 base repeats.